

# Volunteer Newsletter

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System • Tucson, AZ

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter FY2011

## Director's Comments



Our 8th annual Veterans Day Concert and Ceremony were outstanding! This year's theme "Celebrating Our Veterans: Their Sacrifices have Secured Our Freedom" is surely a testament to all those who have given the extreme sacrifice for our freedoms.

Although we at SAVAHCS spend every day of the year honoring our Nation's Veterans in providing quality health care, we also share our love during this day with their families and our community.

I am very appreciative of all those who participated in our activities from working and decorating our SAVAHCS parade float, the Davis-Monthan Airmen who marched along side our float, to those honored family members riding the float who lost loved ones in our Nation's wars. Also the patients, employees, family members, volunteers, and the public who enjoyed our concert. I would be remiss if I did not personally thank Deborah Brookshire, Cliff Baser and the Voluntary Service and Medical Media staffs; Lonning Henning, Master of Ceremonies; and Bonnie Brock as Concert Director, Emeritus, and all of the volunteers who were instrumental in the planning and implementation of this wonderful event.

  
Jonathan H. Gardner, MPA, FACHE  
Director  
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System



## Volunteers Warm up the Holidays for SAVAHCS Hospitalized Veterans

For most people spending time in the hospital at any time of year is not a welcomed activity, but being in the hospital during the Holiday Season increases feelings of anxiety and dread. That is why at the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS) the staff works extra hard to create a warm festive atmosphere.

We could not accomplish this without support from the community. Immediately after Thanksgiving the trees and decorations go up and community groups begin visiting with gifts and cards and hosting parties for our hospitalized patients.

We know the holiday season has officially begun when the American Legion Auxiliary opens the doors to their annual Holiday Gift Shop. Gift Shop services for hospitalized patients included complimentary shopping, gift wrapping and mailing. Everyone looks forward to the smiles this event brings to the faces of our patients.

This year SAVAHCS was fortunate to have some very special visitors who on their own time, traveled to AZ to visit with patients and in doing so, honored our Veterans. On December 22nd actors Dennis Farina, James Reynolds and Bill Brochtrup paid a visit to our patients, all the way from Hollywood. Needless to say this was a very exciting day for SAVAHCS patients and staff. Our celebrity guests spent the whole day visiting patient wards and spending quality time talking with each patient. Patients, family and staff were all touched by the time these three men took out of their own busy holiday season to bring companionship and comfort to our hospitalized Veterans.

This year's donation of gifts from our local community was over whelming. It took the Voluntary Service Staff and volunteers eight hours to sort through the many packages of fleece jackets, warm hats, quilts, handmade Christmas stockings, phone cards, books, cameras, scarves, games and more!

On Christmas Eve Santa and his elves arrived to deliver gifts to every hospitalized patient and the Veteran Homeless Program. Volunteers from the military, community service organizations and SAVAHCS gathered to help bring Holiday Cheer to our Veterans.

Deborah M. Brookshire, M.Ed., CAVS  
Program Manager Voluntary Service

*Left to Right - Celebrity Guests James Reynolds, Dennis Farina, and Bill Brochtrup visited with Veterans at the VA December 22, 2010.*





OEF/OIF Transition Patient Advocate Will Patterson, and Kelly Gomez, Voluntary Service, with a volunteer group from IBM assisting with Welcome Home preparations during the annual United Way Days of Caring event in September.



The Magnet Recognition Program® was developed to recognize health care organizations that provide nursing excellence. The program is called “Magnet” because it is based on research about factors that attract and retain excellent nursing staff as a magnet attracts and retains metal. Magnet status communicates:

- To patients that a facility provides them with excellent nursing care and patient outcomes.
- To nurses that a facility is a good place to work and values its nursing staff.
- To all other healthcare providers that a facility has excellent patient outcomes and strong interdisciplinary collaboration.

The SAVAHCS Nursing chose the Magnet tenets as the basis for developing and improving our Nursing Service and sent our documentation to the Magnet program on October 1, 2010, with a possible site survey in early 2011.

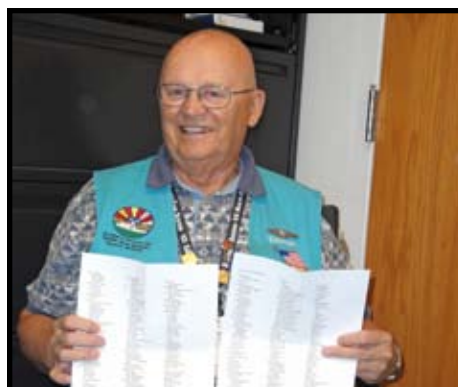
To build awareness of our Magnet journey, Wednesdays have been designated WOW Wednesdays (Working Our Way to Magnet!). Everyone is invited to show their support for our Magnet journey by wearing our Magnet colors, red and blue. Show your support by wearing red and blue on WOW Wednesdays!



Celebrity Guest Ben Vereen performs for the Veterans and their families at the 2010 Veterans Day Concert.



Deborah Brookshire accepting a donation on behalf of SAVAHCS from the Ladies Auxiliary of the Purple Heart on July 2, 2010.



Building 80 Escort Volunteer, Dominick “Dom” Volonino, proudly displays the list of books that he has read since 2003. Dom, a Vietnam Veteran, would peruse the books that were dropped off as donations at the

Escort 80 Station and began a check-off list of the books. He’d read one, return it to the hospital in exchange for another. As of December 2010, Dom has read 476 books. Anyone up to challenging Dom’s record?





## *Dear Volunteers,*

I was contemplating what thoughts to share with you to welcome in the new year. As a typical 21st century Baby-Boomer I immediately turned to Google for inspiration. I typed in New Year's quotes and up popped a quote from Oprah Winfrey, "Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

I, myself was able to relate to this particular sentiment, but when I thought of it in reference to our SAVAHCS Volunteers and Donors and all you have accomplished this year, I know You, are already "getting it right."

Our volunteers and donors make a tremendous difference in the lives of our patients, their families and our staff. I would like to share with you a few specific examples of how in 2010, YOU as a volunteer or donor, made a difference.

YOU – volunteered 154,958 hours to serving Veterans - an eight percent increase above 2009. This saved our hospital over \$3,230,874.00 dollars. The time you served is equal to that of 74.5 full-time employees.

YOUR – generosity contributed over \$690,400 in monetary and material donations, providing comfort to our patients and thereby enhancing the quality of their care. Even in tough economic times you care for and support our Veterans.

YOU – provided staffing support to more than 50 hospital programs.

YOU – enthusiastically supported the following new Veteran-Centered Care programs; HUD/VASH, Veterans Court and Patient Concierge, through volunteer time and donations.

YOU - made 58,619 transports throughout the hospital, saving staff more than 14,650 hours to devote to hands on patient care.

YOU – raised over \$21,700 in donations for homeless Veterans and their families enrolled in HUD/VASH.

YOU – provided respite for the caregivers of Veterans by volunteering more than 2,600 hours in support of the Volunteer Respite program.

YOUR – phone calls to remind patients about their medical appointments decreased the appointment no show rate by over nine percent, thereby increasing productivity and Veterans' access to medical care.

YOU – Dedicated 555 hours to delivering toiletries, books, magazines, lap blankets and more to 9,677 patients, helping to make their hospital stay a little more comfortable.

YOU – helped process over 2,000 donation acknowledgement letters



SW Blind Rehabilitation Center Veterans, Staff, and SAVAHCS leadership pose in front of the new van donated by the Disabled American Veterans Blind Veterans Chapter for use in Veteran recreation outings.

YOU – drove 8,005 hours from all over southern Arizona, providing 3,009 patients transportation to medical appointments. Most of these Veterans have no other transportation options and would not receive timely medical care without your efforts.

These are just a few examples of the many ways SAVAHCS volunteers and donors "get it right."

"Here's to the bright New Year, and a fond farewell to the old; here's to the things that are yet to come, and to the memories that we hold." Anonymous

Thank you for making many memorable moments for our Veterans, their families and our staff.

**Deborah Brookshire**  
*VAVS Program Manager*

## **Service Officer Relocation**



The Veteran Service Officer (VSO) offices have moved from Building 58 to Building 13, located next to the Sports Park and Home-Based Primary Care offices.

The new building provides more offices for the VSOs and a larger waiting room for the visitors.

### **Voluntary Service Newsletter Editorial Board**

**Linda Reynolds**  
*SAVAHCS Associate Director*

**Deborah Brookshire**  
*VAVS Program Manager*

**Gayle Donkin**  
*VAVS Specialist*

**Mandy Martell**  
*VAVS Respite Program Coordinator*

**Kelly Gomez**  
*VAVS Assistant*

**Kimmy Kamerer**  
*VAVS Program Support Assistant*

**Diane Gnuschke**  
*VAVS Program Support Assistant*

**Cliff Baser**  
*Medical Media Officer*

The VAVS newsletter has been created for all volunteers and potential volunteers of the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System. This publication is meant to showcase the wonderful work our volunteers contribute to the VA.

#### **We Want to Hear from You!**

If you have any comments, questions, story ideas, etc., please contact:

**Southern Arizona**

**VA Health Care System**

**Attn: Voluntary Service (9-135)**

**3601 S. 6th Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85723**

**Building 58**

**(520) 629-1822**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan. 25 (1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium \*

Jan. 26 (1:00p.m.-3:00p.m.) VAVS Committee Meeting, Auditorium

Feb. 2 (9:00a.m.-2:00p.m.) Veterans Creative Arts Competition, Auditorium

Feb. 9 (10:00a.m.-11:30a.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium \*

Feb. 16 (10:30a.m.-1:00p.m. and 5:30p.m.-8:00p.m.) 2011 National Salute to Veterans, Auditorium \*

Feb. 22 (1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium \*

Mar. 2 (11:00a.m.-1:00p.m.) American Legion Auxiliary All Employee Luncheon, Auditorium

Mar. 16 (5:00p.m.-6:30p.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium \*

Mar. 21 (2:00p.m.-4:00p.m.) Re-Creation performance, Auditorium

Mar. 29 (10:00a.m.-11:30a.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium \*

Apr. 12 (1:00p.m.-2:00p.m.) VAVS Executive Board Meeting, Patio Conference Room

Apr. 13 (1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium \*

Apr. 21 (4:00p.m.-7:00p.m.) Volunteer Recognition Banquet, Fountain Courtyard

Apr. 27 (1:00p.m.-3:00p.m.) VAVS Committee Meeting, Auditorium

Apr. 29 (9:30a.m.-2:30p.m.) American Red Cross Blood Drive, Auditorium

May 10 (10:00a.m.-11:30a.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium\*

May 25 (1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium\*

May 30 (10:00a.m.) Memorial Day Program, Auditorium

June 10 (9:00a.m.-11:00a.m.) Summer Youth Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium\*

June 25 (10:00am-11:30a.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium\*

July 12 (1:00p.m.-2:00p.m.) VAVS Executive Board Meeting, Bldg. 1A

July 19 (1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium\*

July 20 (11:30a.m.-1:00p.m.) Summer Youth Volunteer Recognition Party, Auditorium\*

July 26 (9:30a.m.-2:30p.m.) American Red Cross Blood Drive, Auditorium

July 27 (5:00p.m.-6:30p.m.) VAVS Committee Meeting, Auditorium

July 27 (6:30p.m.-7:30p.m.) VAVS Recognition Dinner, Auditorium\*

August 10 (10:00a.m.-11:30a.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium\*

August 30 (1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.) Volunteer Orientation, Auditorium\*

\*Reservation or registration required. Please contact Voluntary Service Office, (520) 629-1822.



**Voluntary Service (9-135)**  
**Southern Arizona VA Health Care System**  
**Tucson, Arizona 85723**